

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DLOS-04 OFA-01 EB-07 CG-00 DOTE-00 NSC-05 /090 W

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R 271730Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 6084

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

CNO

USCINCEUR

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USNATO 1363

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0291

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, IC, UK

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: GOI REJECTS UK VERSION OF OBSERVER
PROPOSAL

REF: NATO 1076 (DTG 271005Z FEB 76)

1. GOI, IN FEBRUARY 26 PRESS RELEASE, DENOUNCED AS "PROPAGANDA
TRICK" UK PROPOSAL FOR NATO OBSERVERS ON SHIPS IN CONTESTED
WATERS AND DISMISSED AS "ABSURD" HMG CLAIM THAT ICELAND HAD
TURNED DOWN SUGGESTION IN ORDER TO CONCEAL BLAME OF ICELANDIC
VESSELS FOR INCIDENTS AT SEA. (STATE RADIO, MEANWHILE, RE-
PORTS CONTINUING COAST GUARD CLAIMS THAT UK VESSELS ARE
REPEATEDLY TRYING TO RAM ICELANDIC CUTTERS.)

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2. FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT WAS ISSUED IN RESPONSE TO HMG RELEASE PREVIOUS DAY WHICH HAD EXPLAINED OBSERVER PROPOSAL AND ANNOUNCED THAT GOI HAD REJECTED IT. EXCERPT FROM ICELANDIC STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE.

THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT, ON 24 FEBRUARY, DECIDED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ACCEPT THE BRITISH PROPOSAL FOR OBSERVERS SINCE IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR ICELAND TO APPROVE ANY RULES OR ANY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION CONCERNING THE PRESENCE OF BRITISH WARSHIPS AND TUGBOATS WITHIN THE ICELANDIC FISHERY LIMITS AND THUS TACITLY (SIC) RECOGNIZE THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE INSIDE ICELANDIC JURISDICTION. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE TASK OF THE PROPOSED OBSERVERS COULD BE CONDUCTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULD SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE. THIS POSITION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT WAS MADE KNOWN IN THE NATO-COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY, WHICH THEN DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE THE MATTER ANY FURTHER.

THE BRITISH PROPOSAL TO STATION OBSERVERS ON BOARD THE SHIPS IN QUESTION IS A PROPAGANDA TRICK, AS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN FROM THE STATEMENT OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE YESTERDAY STATING THAT THE ICELANDIC REJECTION TO ACCEPT THE SAID PROPOSAL MAKES IT CLEAR THAT IT IS ICELAND'S POLICY TO LET THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSELS INTENTIONALLY RAM THE BRITISH WARSHIPS AND THAT, CONSEQUENTLY, THE ICELANDERS DO NOT WISH ANY NEUTRAL OBSERVERS TO BE PLACED ON BOARD THE COAST GUARD VESSELS AND THE WARSHIPS, WHO WOULD WITNESS SUCH CONDUCT. THESE ACCUSATIONS ARE HARDLY WORTH A REPLY. IT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY CONFIRMED BY MEANS OF MARITIME COURT INQUIRIES (WHICH THE BRITISH HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO ATTEND), BY PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMS AND BY THE REPORTS OF WELL KNOWN FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ON BOARD THE WARSHIPS AND THE COAST GUARD VESSELS, THAT THE BRITISH NAVAL FRIGATES HAVE MADE CONSIDERED EFFORTS TO RAM THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSELS, NOT ONLY WHEN THE LATTER ARE ENGAGED IN THE TASK OF UPHOLDING LAW AND ORDER WHERE THE TRAWLERS ARE FISHING, BUT ALSO FREQUENTLY WHEN THEY ARE POSI-

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TIONED FAR AWAY FROM ANY BRITISH FISHING VESSEL. IT IS ABSURD AND EVEN LUDICROUS TO ASSERT THAT THE TINY ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSELS EVER ATTEMPT TO RAM THE BRITISH WARSHIPS, WHICH ARE ALMOST THREE TIMES THEIR SIZE AND HAVE ALMOST TWICE THEIR SPEED.

ONCE AGAIN THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND PROTESTS, IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS, AGAINST THE INVASION OF

BRITISH WARSHIPS AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTO ICELANDIC
JURISDICTION, AND THEIR IMPUDENT BEHAVIOR ON THE FISHING
GROUNDS OFF ICELAND, AND HOLDS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FULLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL DAMAGES AND INJURIES WHICH OCCUR AS
A RESULT OF ITS MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THIS AREA, AND
THE HIGHLY PERILOUS CONDUCT OF HER WARSHIPS, MILITARY
AIRCRAFT AND TUGBOATS. END QUOTE.
MARTIN

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